United Nations A/63/414/Add.5

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 December 2008

Original: Arabic

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 49 (e)

Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Awsan **Al-Aud** (Yemen)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 49 (see A/63/414, para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 24th and 30th meetings, on 4 and 26 November 2008. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/63/SR.24 and 30).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/63/L.16 and A/C.2/63/L.53

2. At the 24th meeting, on 4 November, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/63/L.16), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "*Recalling* its resolutions 58/211 of 23 December 2003, 61/202 of 20 December 2006, 62/193 of 19 December 2007 and other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in eight parts, under the symbol A/63/414 and Add.1-7.

08-63749 (E) 111208

"*Recalling also* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

"*Reasserting its commitment* to combating and reversing desertification and drought/land degradation, eradicating extreme poverty, promoting sustainable development in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas and improving the livelihoods of people affected by drought and/or desertification,

"*Determined* to build upon the momentum and to boost the spirit of international solidarity generated by the designation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, and welcoming the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018),

"*Reaffirming* the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions in the world,

"*Emphasizing* that desertification and drought/land degradation seriously threaten the ability of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and recognizing that the timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve these goals,

"*Concerned* about the negative impacts desertification, land degradation, loss of biological diversity and climate change have on each other, while emphasizing the potential benefits of complementarities in addressing these problems in a mutually supportive manner,

"*Reaffirming* the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ('Johannesburg Plan of Implementation'), which recognizes the Convention as one of the tools for poverty eradication,

"*Recognizing* the need to provide the secretariat of the Convention with stable, adequate and predictable resources in order to enable it to continue to discharge its responsibilities in an efficient and timely manner,

"*Welcoming* the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session to consider, inter alia, the issue of desertification and drought during its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions,

"*Expressing its deep appreciation* to the Government of Germany for hosting the High-level Policy Dialogue in Bonn on 27 May 2008,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

"2. *Reaffirms its resolve* to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention with a view to addressing causes of desertification and land degradation, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation, through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology and capacity-building at all levels;

"3. *Also reaffirms* its decision to declare the decade 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification;

"4. *Notes* the efforts of the Executive Secretary of the Convention to continue the administrative renewal and reform of the secretariat and realign its functions in order to fully implement the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and bring them into line with the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

"5. *Also notes* the request made for an assessment of the Global Mechanism by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations, and looks forward to its findings, which are to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth session;

"6. *Reiterates its call upon* Governments, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;

"7. *Notes* the ongoing work of the Joint Liaison Group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities in the work of the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

"8. *Recognizes* the potential of the Convention to contribute to addressing the global food crisis, including by protecting land from becoming degraded, in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas in order to offer new economic opportunities for impoverished populations living in those areas;

"9. *Invites* developed countries that are parties to the Convention and other Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and other relevant organizations to make resources available to affected developing countries for the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

"10. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of the Convention, in coordination with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, to actively prepare for and participate in the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development with a view to ensuring that the Convention core issues, in particular those relating to land degradation, drought and desertification, are duly considered in the context of sustainable development during the deliberations of the policy session, with a view to ensuring a successful outcome from the entire cycle of the Commission;

"11. *Calls upon* the international community to lend full support to the implementation of the ten-year strategy and to prioritize investment in initiatives to prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, taking into account national circumstances and priorities;

"12. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to consider substantially increasing resource allocation to its land degradation focal area during the next replenishment;

"13. *Recognizes* the cross-sectoral nature of desertification/land degradation, and in this regard invites all relevant United Nations agencies to cooperate under the aegis of the Convention to support an effective response to land degradation, led by the vision and objectives of the strategy adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth session;

"14. *Calls upon* the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to extend a standing invitation to the Executive Secretary of the Convention to participate in its sessions when issues relating to sustainable development are discussed;

"15. *Invites* the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, when setting the dates of its meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to help ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

"16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the sub-item entitled 'Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa';

"17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including a report on the implementation of the Convention, to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session."

3. At its 30th meeting, on 26 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/63/L.53), submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Andrei Metelitsa (Belarus), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.16.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications (see A/C.2/63/SR.30).

5. Also at the 30th meeting, the representative of Lebanon orally corrected the draft resolution.

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft resolution, as orally corrected (see para. 9).

7. After the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of India.

8. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.53, draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.16 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

9. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 58/211 of 23 December 2003, 61/202 of 20 December 2006, 62/193 of 19 December 2007 and other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1]

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[2]

Reasserting its commitment to combating and reversing desertification and land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, consistent with articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Convention, and to mitigating the effect of drought, eradicating extreme poverty, promoting sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of people affected by drought and/or desertification, taking into account the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018),[3]

Determined to build upon the momentum and to boost the spirit of international solidarity generated by the designation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, and welcoming the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018),

Reaffirming the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification, land degradation and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world,

Emphasizing that desertification, land degradation and drought seriously threaten the ability of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and recognizing that the timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve these goals,

Noting the need for enhanced cooperation among the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[4] and the Convention on Biological

---

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] See resolution 60/1.

[3] A/C.2/62/7, annex.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

Diversity[5] (the "Rio Conventions"), while respecting their individual mandates, concerned by the negative impacts that desertification, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and climate change have on each other, and recognizing the potential benefits of complementarities in addressing these problems in a mutually supportive manner,

Reaffirming the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[6] which recognizes the Convention to Combat Desertification as one of the tools for poverty eradication,

Recognizing the need to provide the secretariat of the Convention with stable, adequate and predictable resources in order to enable it to continue to discharge its responsibilities in an efficient and timely manner,

Welcoming the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session to consider, inter alia, the issue of desertification and drought during its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions,[7]

Welcoming also the fact that the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixteenth session convened an intergovernmental forum to review some topics that are relevant to the Convention in preparation for the policy decisions on those topics by the Commission at its seventeenth session,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Germany for hosting the High-level Policy Dialogue in Bonn on 27 May 2008,

Expressing its deep appreciation also to the Government of Turkey for hosting the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology in Istanbul from 3 to 14 November 2008,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;[8]

2. *Reaffirms its resolve* to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention[1] with a view to addressing causes of desertification and land degradation, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation, through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology and capacity-building at all levels;

3. *Reaffirms its decision* to declare the decade 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification;

4. *Continues to support* the efforts of the Executive Secretary of the Convention to continue the administrative renewal and reform of the secretariat and to realign its functions in order to fully implement the recommendations of the Joint

---

[5] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[6] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[7] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9* (E/2003/29), chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution I.

[8] See A/63/294, sect. II.

Inspection Unit and bring them into line with the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;[3]

5. *Notes* the request made by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention for an assessment of the Global Mechanism by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations,[9] and looks forward to its findings, which are to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth session;

6. *Reiterates its call upon* Governments, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification and land degradation into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;

7. *Invites* the affected countries to prepare national strategies for the effective implementation of sustainable land management, and invites donors to support such efforts, on request, and in accordance with all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness;

8. *Notes* the ongoing work of the Joint Liaison Group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[4] the Convention on Biological Diversity[5] and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities in the work of the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

9. *Recognizes* the potential of the Convention to contribute to addressing global food security, including by protecting land from becoming degraded and mitigating the effects of drought in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, in order to offer new economic opportunities for enhancing rural development, agricultural productivity and food security for impoverished populations living in those areas;

10. *Invites* developed countries that are parties to the Convention and other Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and other relevant organizations to make resources available to affected developing countries for the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

11. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of the Convention, in coordination with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, to actively prepare for and participate in the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development with a view to ensuring that the core issues of the Convention, in particular those relating to land degradation, drought and desertification, are duly considered in the context of sustainable development during the deliberations of the policy session, with a view to ensuring a successful outcome from the entire cycle of the Commission;

12. *Encourages* developed States parties to the Convention to consider, in accordance with their different obligations under the Convention, prioritizing the need for supporting the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan in their respective policies and programmes for cooperation, and further encourages affected

[9] A/C.2/62/7, annex, para. 27.

developing countries to consider making this a priority in their cooperation assistance arrangements;

13. *Invites* donors to the Global Environment Facility to ensure that the Facility is adequately resourced during the next replenishment period in order to allow it to allocate sufficient and adequate resources to its six focal areas, in particular its land degradation focal area;

14. *Recognizes* the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, and in this regard invites all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the Convention secretariat in supporting an effective response to desertification and drought;

15. *Urges* the Committee on Science and Technology to accelerate its efforts to establish links with scientific communities in order to make full use of relevant initiatives in areas relating to sustainable land and water management;

16. *Requests* all States parties to the Convention to promote awareness among local populations, particularly women, youth and civil society organizations, of, and include them in, the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan, and encourages affected States parties and donors to take into account the issue of participation of civil society in Convention processes when setting priorities in national development strategies;

17. *Stresses* the need to accelerate the ongoing process of adopting the euro as the budgetary and accounting currency of the Convention secretariat, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General, taking into account the institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat, to facilitate the implementation of decisions of the Conference of the Parties related to the protection of the Convention budget against the negative effects of currency fluctuations;

18. *Invites* the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, when setting the dates of its meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to help ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa";

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including a report on the implementation of the Convention, to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.